

REMARKS

With this amendment, claim 19 has been canceled. Claim 21 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of canceled claim 19. Claim 20 has been amended to further clarify the subject matter being claimed. The Applicant has carefully and thoughtfully considered the Office Action and the comments therein. For the reasons given below, it is submitted that this application is in condition for allowance.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

On pages 2-9, the Action rejects claims 2-16, 19, and 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Publication No. 2001/0003525 to Ebina et al. (hereinafter Ebina) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,751,213 to Sun et al. (hereinafter Sun). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

With respect to claim 21, Applicants respectfully submit that Ebina in view of Sun does not teach or suggest all of the elements of claim 21, as will be shown, for at least the following reasons.

First, Ebina does not disclose “an internal communication path which connects said cell distributors, said selectors, **a first external communication path, and a second external communication path,**” as recited in claim 21. Instead, Ebina teaches a device in which several nodes, connected in series via transmission lines, form a ring network. Ebina, paragraphs [0017] and [0020] and FIG. 1. A control cell, containing control information, is transmitted by ATM (Asynchronous Transfer Mode) between a plurality of nodes connected into a ring shape. Ebina, paragraph [0009]. Each individual node contains an ATM switch, a receiving means, a transmitting means, and a line control MPU. Ebina, paragraph [0020]. Ebina does not disclose “a first external communication path, and a second external communication path” as recited in claim 21. In contrast, claim 21 recites “an internal communication path which connects said cell distributors, said selectors, a first external communication path, and a second external communication path,” Thus Ebina does not disclose “an internal communication path which connects said cell distributors, said selectors, **a first external communication path, and a second external communication path,**” as recited in claim 21.

Second, Ebina does not disclose a “communication control device” which “processes said communication cells received from the first external communication path and transmits the communication cells to the second external communication path.” As was discussed above, Ebina does not disclose “a first external communication path, and a second external communication path” as recited in claim 21. Ebina, therefore, does not disclose “communication control device” which “processes said communication cells received from the first external communication path and transmits the communication cells to the second external communication path,” as recited in claim 21.

Third, Sun fails to overcome the deficiencies of Ebina. Sun discloses using tokens to control the flow of information between ports on a shared channel so that bandwidth is not wasted. Sun, Col. 2, l. 20-25. Thus Sun does not disclose “an internal communication path which connects said cell distributors, said selectors, a first external communication path, and a second external communication path,” as recited in claim 21. Sun, therefore, does not disclose “communication control device” which “processes said communication cells received from the first external communication path and transmits the communication cells to the second external communication path,” as recited in claim 21. For at least these reasons, Sun does not overcome the deficiencies of Ebina.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants believe that claim 21 is allowable and respectfully request that the above rejection of claim 21 be withdrawn and that claim 21 be allowed. Dependent claims 2-18 and 20 are believed to be allowable, at least, for being dependent from an allowable claim. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the above rejection of claims 2-18, 20, and 21 be withdrawn and that claims 2-18, 20, and 21 be allowed.

Conclusion

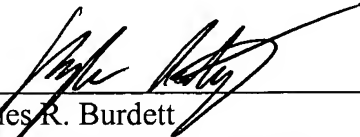
All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicants believe that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for

any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is hereby invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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